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ABSTRACT

There has been much recent debate in both educational and political circles about the utility of choice as a means of improving the educational system. This book argues that any discussion of choice must address choice in public schools. The book is organized into seven chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of choice in public education, including the arguments for choice and descriptions of the various choice options. Three necessary components of education reform are identified--diversity, autonomy, and equity. Chapter 2 reviews the research on public school choice and identifies effective choice options and plans currently in practice. A controlled-choice program within an alternative/magnet school is advocated. Chapters 3-5 include case studies of three school districts--Richmond, California; Lowell, Massachusetts; and Montclair, New Jersey--that have implemented choice programs with varying degrees of success. Chapter 6 details a step-by-step planning process for parents and school professionals interested in implementing systemwide choice in their local school districts. Chapter 7 concludes with an examination of the future of choice in public education and a discussion of the larger issue of school improvement and educational reform. Appendices contain samples of a parent and professionals survey, a controlled-admissions and transfer policy, information on creating a parent-information center, and a planning form. (Contains 100 references.) (LMI)

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